

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AID-20 A-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SCCT-01 SY-05 FBO-02 IGA-01 /097 W

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FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3889

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE VIENTIANE 3464

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, LA, US

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION TO TERMINATE USAID PROVINCIAL
OFFICES FORMALLY

IN VIEW OF CONTINUING DETERIORATING SITUATION AND RAPID
TAKEOVER BY PL, WE HAVE CONCLUDED TIME HAS COME TO MAKE
DECISIONS ON OUR POSTURE IN LAOS. WE SHALL SEND A
SEPARATE GENERAL POLICY MESSAGE, BUT WE WOULD LIKE
APPROVAL FOR A LETTER WHICH I WOULD PROPOSE TO DELIVER
TO PRIME MINISTER (WITH COPIES TO DEPUTY PRMIN AND
FONMIN PHOU VONGVICHIT, DEPUTY PRMIN LEAUM INSISIENGMAI,
AND MINISTER OF ECONOMY AND PLAN SOTH PETHRASY) ALONG
FOLLOWING LINES:

QUOTE: YOUR HIGHNESS:

I HAVE HAD OCCASION TO SPEAK WITH YOU AND WITH THE
FOREIGN MINISTER, PHAGNA PHOUMI VONGVICHIT, SEVERAL TIMES
IN RECENT DAYS EXPRESSING MY GOVERNMENT'S SERIOUS
CONCERN OVER THE DETERIORATING SECURITY SITUATION AND
THE DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST USAID THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE
IN BAN HOUET SAI, VIENTIANE, PAKSE, SAVANNAKHET AND
LUANG PRABANG. IN SAVANNAKHET AMERICANS WERE HELD
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ILLEGALLY AND THREATENED. IN LUANG PRABANG DEMONSTRATION-

TORS DESTROYED PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT, SOME OF WHICH BELONGS TO THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, BUT MOST OF WHICH, AS YOUR HIGHNESS KNOWS, IS IN FACT THE PROPERTY OF THE ROYAL LAO GOVERNMENT. NOWHERE HAVE GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES PROVIDED ADEQUATE PROTECTION.

THIS SITUATION, WHICH APPEARS TO HAVE BECOME A GENERAL TREND THROUGHOUT THE REGIONS OF LAOS, MAKES IT UNTENABLE FOR THE U.S. TO CONTINUE USAID OFFICES IN THE PROVINCES. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, WE HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO WITHDRAW AMERICAN PERSONNEL AND THIRD COUNTRY NATIONAL PERSONNEL FROM ALL POSTS IN LAOS OUTSIDE VIENTIANE. THE WITHDRAWAL OF THESE PERSONNEL NECESSARILY PRECLUDES THE CONTINUATION OF MUTUALLY AGREED UPON ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS IN THE PROVINCES SUPPORTED BY THOSE OFFICES.

IN VIEW OF THE HARMONIOUS RELATIONS THAT OUR USAID MISSION HAS HAD OVER THE YEARS WITH THE ROYAL LAO GOVERNMENT, WE WOULD HOPE THAT THE TERMINATION OF THE OFFICES, THE TRANSFER OF PROPERTY TO THE GOVERNMENT AND THE READJUSTMENTS OF AID PROGRAMS COULD BE DONE ON AN ORDERLY BASIS AND IN A PROPER WAY. WE THEREFORE PROPOSE THAT THE GOVERNMENT AUTHORIZE SENDING AN ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM OF TWO OR THREE AMERICAN OFFICIALS TO EACH POST TO ACCOMPLISH THE FOLLOWING TASKS:

1. PROVIDE PROPER NOTICE TO LAO EMPLOYEES IN EACH POST AND MAKE FINAL PAYMENT OF ALL SALARIES AND SEVERANCE PAY DUE AND PAYABLE TO THESE EMPLOYEES;
2. CONDUCT A FINAL INVENTORY OF ALL RESIDUAL FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES AND TURN THESE OVER TO WHOMEVER YOUR GOVERNMENT DESIGNATES AS THE RECEIVING AUTHORITY;
3. ALLOW THE USAID AMERICAN AND THIRD COUNTRY NATIONAL EMPLOYEES TO PACK AND SHIP OUT THEIR PERSONAL EFFECTS AND HOUSEHOLD GOODS; AND
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4. MAKE PROPER ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE TERMINATION OF LEASES OF USAID DWELLINGS WITH LOCAL LANDLORDS.

UNDER PREVAILING CIRCUMSTANCES, HOWEVER, IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO HAVE THESE TEAMS ACCOMPANIED BY AUTHORITY GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES, SUCH AS MIXED TEAMS FROM THE JOINT CENTRAL COMMISSION TO IMPLEMENT THE

AGREEMENT, TO INSURE THEIR PROTECTION. FURTHERMORE, IN ORDER TO AVOID ANY MISUNDERSTANDING OR MISINTERPRETATION OF THESE ACTIONS, I WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION MAKING A PUBLIC STATEMENT THAT YOUR GOVERNMENT AND THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HAVE AGREED TO WITHDRAW USAID REPRESENTATION IN THE PROVINCES OF LAOS. WE WOULD HOPE THAT WE COULD BEGIN TO CLOSE OUT USAID FIELD POSTS THIS WEEK.

IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT SUFFICIENT COMMODITIES AND EQUIPMENT WERE AT EACH PROVINCIAL LOCATION FOR THE COMPLETION OF PROJECTS (SUCH AS CLASSROOM CONSTRUCTION, DUG WELLS, IRRIGATION PROJECTS, ETC.) THAT ARE UNDERWAY, AS WELL AS SUFFICIENT MEDICAL SUPPLIES FOR THE CONTINUED OPERATIONS OF HOSPITALS AND DISPENSARIES. THERE ARE, HOWEVER, CERTAIN PLACES WHERE THE DEMONSTRATORS HAVE RECENTLY OCCUPIED USAID FACILITIES INCLUDING WAREHOUSES AND TAKEN COMMODITIES AND FOOD FROM THERE INSTALLATIONS.

WE DEEPLY REGRET THAT WE HAVE HAD TO REACH THIS CONCLUSION. THE WITHDRAWAL OF USAID PROVINCIAL OFFICES WILL DISRUPT THE FLOW OF ASSISTANCE. NEVERTHELESS, WE ARE PREPARED TO MEET IMMEDIATELY WITH YOUR DESIGNATED REPRESENTATIVE TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE ALTERNATE PROCEDURES AND SYSTEMS OF IMPLEMENTING PROJECTS, FEEDING AND PROVIDING MEDICAL CARE IN THE PROVINCES FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE LAO PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN RECEIVING SUCH ASSISTANCE. I WOULD HOPE THAT YOUR REPRESENTATIVE COULD ALSO ARRANGE FOR THE ORDERLY CLOSING OF USAID OFFICES AS OUTLINED ABOVE.

ACCEPT, YOUR HIGHNESS, THE RENEWED ASSURANCES OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MY HIGHEST CONSIDERATION. END QUOTE
CHAPMANG

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